AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS, SOCIAL SUPPORT AND LONELINESS LEVELS AMONG UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationships between the levels of psychological distress, social supports, financial stresses, and loneliness among unemployed people. Comparisons between never married, married, and divorced/separated groups revealed levels of financial worries were high for all groups. Never married unemployed perceived the lowest levels of psychological distress as well as social loneliness. Married people reported to be the best supported and least emotionally lonely. Divorced and separated people were severely disadvantaged compared to both other groups on all variables examined. Perceived social supports were negatively related with most psychological and economic distress measures and were also negatively correlated with loneliness measures. Only supports received from family and close friends were found to be associated with measures of psychological distress. Support received from peers (other unemployed), and the New Zealand Employment Service staff only showed few associations with the unemployed's feelings of loneliness or psychological distress. Implications of the findings were discussed and specific future research directions were given.

1. INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is one of the most significant social problems many New Zealanders have faced for the last two decades. Unfortunately, the impact of unemployment goes beyond direct financial costs as it involves not only losing the basis for earning one's living, but also for being respected in a society characterised by high material and economic values. Loss of job creates insecurity concerning one's future life perspective, especially if the overall economic situation is unfavourable or if the person has been unemployed for a long time.

It is not surprising to find that studies examining the psychological effects of unemployment generally report a detriment of psychological and even physical well-being for the majority of the unemployed (Dooley & Catalano, 1988; Warr, 1987 a, b). Unemployed people may also be prone to find themselves socially lonely or isolated, as they may lose the connections they had in the social network of their work (Jackson & Walsh, 1987). In addition, the experience of loneliness has generally been found to be unpleasant and it may be particularly detrimental to people's psychological health under a stressful situation such as being unemployed (Perlman & Peplau, 1981).

If the person loses his or her work contacts, they may also lose important social relationships and/or sources of social support. Social support in its various forms (e.g., encouragement, financial assistance, advice or information, etc.) has been found to help reduce the adverse effects of a stressful situation such as unemployment (Gore, 1978; Pearlin et al., 1981).

This exploratory study will endeavour to examine how the kinds of social supports received by the unemployed and that they perceive to be available to them are related to their well-being. The participants' levels of loneliness as well as economic factors such as financial worries and availability of funds will also be examined.

1.1 HOW DO THE ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE UNEMPLOYED AFFECT THEIR MENTAL HEALTH?

The effects of income deprivation (total loss or reduction) are expected to be associated with negative psychological effects for several reasons. Overall income is undoubtedly a factor in personal and social functioning because of its role in providing access to pleasurable activities and avoiding (or quickly resolving) negative occurrences.

Warr (1984) concluded that low pay may contribute to low context-free mental health. Warr and Jackson (1985) examined the relationship between financial support and mental health. They found that having access to financial support could significantly predict less mental health deterioration over a nine-month period. This suggests the importance of having access to financial supports is significant in the prevention of mental health deficits and that efforts should be made to ensure unemployed people have such support.

Fryer & Payne (1986) suggested low income may contribute indirectly to ill health by affecting other variables known to be associated with poor health. For example, they indicate that low income limits family, social and leisure activities, as well as independence of action and future oriented activity, all of

which may affect mental health. This implies that being financially able to engage in activities that involve other people (including family) and social activities in general is an important contributing factor to better psychological health levels.

This idea is also supported by Kilpatrick and Trew (1985) who found that lack of money during unemployment (expected to reduce social and entertainment activities) was associated with higher psychological distress levels. Ullah (1990) also presented some evidence of an indirect association between income and psychological health. He showed that the subjective levels of financial strain experienced, but not the amount of income received, was associated with psychological well-being.

This is an important finding because it makes the distinction between objective and subjective levels of financial strain. Not only is the person required to have limited amounts of money but they must also feel financially restricted and unable to cope with whatever means he or she may have. It is not hard to hypothesise that an unemployed person would feel economically restricted, especially if he or she has dependants, other responsibilities, or lacks supports that would help him/her financially.

In sum, it can be seen that the reduced financial resources that typically accompany unemployment may have both direct and indirect effects on the unemployeds' mental health. Not having money may directly effect the psychological well-being of a person and indirectly modify the access to experiences likely to reduce the stress that may accompany unemployment.

1.2 THEORIES / MODELS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Several explanations have been offered as to how the psychological well-being of the unemployed individual is affected and the experiences of distress come about, (for a critical review see Ezzy, 1993). I will refer to two approaches underlying the health consequences of unemployment. They are related to this research in that they cover aspects such as interpersonal contact and availability of money that are examined in this study.

The first model is the Functional or deprivational approach proposed by Jahoda (1982). This approach is so called because it argues that mental health problems are caused by the removal (or deprivation) of beneficial functions that employment is thought to provide.

The first type of beneficial function employment conveys is the manifest or intended one of providing the individual with the income (pay) for his/her work. The second type of beneficial function was referred to by Jahoda the latent or unintended functions of employment. These latent beneficial functions are time structure, social contact, activity, status, purposefulness, and control.

It is these latent beneficial functions that are, according to Jahoda, even more important than the financial income a job creates. When they are removed by the job loss, the person fails to keep busy doing things, loses any sense of purpose, and withdraws from social contact. According to Jahoda, these functional supports help keep the person in touch with reality and, if they are absent as in the case of the unemployment, the person is likely to experience loneliness, boredom, depression and anxiety.

The second approach is an extension of Jahoda's model proposed by Warr (1987a,b). He proposed that the milieu the employed person is in offers nine environmental features, or "Vitamins", that contribute to positive mental health. These environmental features are absent in the case of unemployment, and therefore the jobless person will not have the opportunity to benefit from them.

The first of the environmental features is Opportunity for Control. This feature refers to the fewer chances the unemployed has, when compared to an employed person, to decide and act in their chosen ways. The second environmental feature is Opportunity for Skill Use. That is, the unemployed may not only be prevented from using the skills they already possess, but they also may not have a chance to develop or acquire new skills. The third component of the vitamin model is Externally Generated Goals. This refers to the fact that fewer task demands and reduced objectives may lead the person to lose a sense of purpose or how to use their time and to keep actively motivated. The fourth feature is Variety. Varied and novel experiences that may be encountered when employed may turn into an absence of novelty and an unchanging routine when unemployed. The fifth feature is Environmental Clarity, which refers to information about the consequences of behaviour and information about the future. Unemployed people may find themselves in an unclear environment in the sense that they are less likely to be able to make plans or even know what is going to happen to them in the future. Feature number six in Warr's model is Availability of Money. In most cases, access to money is severely restricted when unemployed. Shortage of money has been found to be one of the greatest sources of personal and family problems (Smith, 1980). In addition, poverty not only bears down on basic needs for food

and protection, but also hinders activity and attenuates one's sense of control. The seventh feature is Physical Security. This component is usually associated with the availability of money. Reduced income can lead to inappropriate accommodation or the individuals may even become homeless. The eighth feature is Opportunity for Interpersonal Contact. Contact with others is important because it meets needs for friendship, may help reduce feelings of loneliness, and provides for the possibility of help and social support. The last component of the model is Valued Social Position. Being employed rather than unemployed is, in most societies, a central source of public and private esteem and status.

In sum, Warr's (1987a,b) approach could also be considered a deprivational model of unemployment. He suggests that having access to all these factors (through employment), contributes to better psychological well-being because each of them is a vitamin that mentally nurtures the person. While the employed are supplied with the gratifying features their jobs provide, the unemployed are deprived of these beneficial factors and therefore their mental health is expected to be worse.

One of the aims of this study to investigate how factors such as the availability of money or the opportunity for interpersonal contact are related to the psychological well-being of the unemployed individual.

1.3 DOES SOCIAL SUPPORT HELP REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT?

To understand how social support may help in the coping process, the notion of what social support is must be first clarified. Many a definition has been offered for what is social support. Sarason et al. (1983), for example, defined social support as the existence or availability of people on whom we can rely, people who let us know that they care about, value and love us.

Cobb (1976) described social support as information leading the person to believe that he or she is loved and cared for (emotional support), that he or she is esteemed and valued (esteem support), and that he or she is part of a network of communication and mutual obligation (network support). Moss (1973) defined support as "the subjective feeling of belonging, of being accepted, of being loved, of being needed all for oneself and not for what one can do" (p.237). It can be seen that social support is defined differently by various authors, and that different types of supports may have distinct functions.

In an attempt to clarify the ambiguity and multi-faceted nature of the term social support Shumaker & Brownell (1984) defined social support as an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or the recipient as being intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient. This definition suggests that one of the most important concepts of social support is that the supportive action one person does in order to help another must be perceived as beneficial by the recipient. This notion is important as it can only

be achieved if the relationship between the exchanging partners is satisfying and supportive both ways.

This, in turn, suggests that social support could be equated with the quality of the social relationships people have and the satisfaction they derive from them. Social relationships are likely to be the main providers of social interactions, including those with family members, which in turn may enhance people's sense of self worth. This means the social relationships a person has may be beneficial if they are satisfying and provide the supports required to make that person feel an integrated part of a supportive network.

Auslander (1988) reported that the availability of close and supportive ties, especially from friends and family, was the most important factor in predicting the health of the unemployed. Moreover, she found that those close ties were more important for the unemployed than the employed. Similarly, Miles (1983) reported that the narrow range of social contacts typically found among the unemployed was significantly associated with the higher level of psychological distress.

These findings suggest that not only the quality of close, supportive ties are important to the unemployed, but also the amount of social contacts the person has, bears a significance to his/her psychological well-being. This, in turn, implies that the individual's well-being may be particularly vulnerable if the person does not have either of these interacting relationships.

It can be expected that the greater the social support perceived in terms of both quantity and quality, the greater the individual's ability to cope with psychological distress. Cohen & Wills, (1985) proposed that it is precisely the

feeling that others can and are willing to help can prevent a potentially stressful event from being appraised as stressful and thus diminish the likelihood of physiological and psychological strains. Wethington & Kessler (1986) also presented evidence that the perception of availability of support was especially important for the individual's well-being. These researchers found that if the individual perceives support to be available, he or she is more likely to feel that problems are not particularly threatening, hence his/her psychological well-being will be better protected.

This study examines "received" supports from family, peers and the New Zealand Employment Service staff. A retrospective assessment by the unemployed of actual behaviours from those three important sources of social support was carried out to compare and evaluate how adequate their supportive behaviours were and how satisfied or dissatisfied the unemployed were with them.

Moreover, the manner in which different functional supports such as emotional, informational, tangible, affectionate and positive interaction supports are related to the loneliness and well-being of the unemployed is also explored. This was done because each of these particular forms of support are distinct and therefore expected to influence the individual's well-being in different ways.

1.4 SOURCES AND THEORETICAL MODELS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

Social support is most often offered by networks of family, friends or colleagues who treat an individual as unique, and provide information, feedback, and comfort in continuous patterns of interaction. Three different theoretical models describe how social support may have beneficial effects.

The first of these models is the Buffering (Indirect Effects) Hypothesis. This modelhsuggests social support is related to well being primarily for persons who are experiencing stress. Social support is used as a coping resource that lessens or blocks potential pathogenic impact of stressors, but is not particularly helpful for persons who are relatively stress-free (Cohen & Wills, 1985). According to this hypothesis, social support has a beneficial effect in times of crisis as it may shield or buffer the impact of a stressful situation in two possible ways.

First, support may mediate between the stressful event (or expectation of that event) and a stress reaction by lessening or preventing a stress appraisal response. This means that if the person feels there are people willing and available to offer supports to him/her, then the person is more likely to perceive the possible impairment that the event may cause as being less threatening or less stressful. At the same time this is also likely to enhance the person's perception of his/her coping ability with the requirements expected form him/her in the face of that situation.

Second, adequate support may intervene between the experience of stress and the onset of the pathological effect by reducing or eliminating the stress

reaction or by directly influencing physiological processes. For example, support may moderate the impact of stress appraisal by providing a solution to the problem, by reducing the perceived significance of the problem, or by facilitating healthful behaviours.

The second model of social support is the Main (Direct) Effects Hypothesis. This model posits that social support has beneficial effects regardless of the level of other stressors (Billings & Moos, 1982). This hypothesis postulates that social support has a generalised beneficial effect upon the overall well-being of the person because it provides positive affect, a sense of predictability and stability in the person's life situation, and a recognition of self-worth. This means that if the person is part of a large, supportive social network, for example, he/she is likely to be supplied with regular positive experiences together with a set of stable, socially rewarding roles in the community. This, in turn, will be beneficial to his/her overall well-being regardless of the level of stress experienced. These first two hypotheses are not mutually exclusive, meaning that under stressful conditions it is possible for social support to have both direct and buffering effects.

Optimal Matching Theory is the third model of social support. This model, which was developed to explain buffering effects, proposes that there are six types of social supports and each supplies the recipient with a somewhat different social provision that serves as a coping resource in times of stress (Cutrona & Russell, 1990). The six types of social support are : 1) Attachment - which refers to a sense of emotional connection that provides safety and security; 2) Social Integration - or a sense that the person's interests and concerns are

shared by others; 3) Reassurance of Worth - which means that the person's skills and abilities are acknowledged and valued; 4) Reliable Alliance - or the sense that a person can count on assistance under any circumstances; 5) Guidance or the realisation that trustworthy and authoritative others will provide advice; and 6) Opportunity for Nurturance - or the opportunity to be responsible for the well being of another. This model specifically predicts that providing an unemployed worker with the type of support required by the coping demands of job loss would be especially helpful.

The aim of this study is to examine the effects of social support on the stressors related to unemployment. Specific types of functional supports are being assessed rather than considering the effects of the structural measures such as number of friends or number of people they get together with for leisure activities.

This distinction is important because it is functional measures of social support that have been found to be better predictors of psychological well-being (Cohen, Mermelstein, Kamark, et al., 1985). That is, how supportive, rather than how large or small a social network is, seems to be more important in terms of how beneficial it is for the individual. For example, it is quite possible that the psychological well-being of a person with a small, yet very supportive, network of friends and family will be more protected than the well-being of a person with a large network of persons who do not provide the specific supports he or she needs.

1.5 HOW IS UNEMPLOYMENT RELATED TO SOCIAL SUPPORT AND LONELINESS?

Unemployment is a personal experience and as such is likely to be perceived in unique and distinctive ways not only by the unemployed person but by his or her family as well. This means that each individual will perceive the experience of unemployment differently because of his/her personal circumstances as well as the external environmental features that surround him/her.

For some people, becoming and being unemployed may be experienced as a positive event. The jobless individual may feel he or she has now the opportunity to start doing new, different or more enjoyable things, especially if their former job was dissatisfactory, stressful or demeaning. It is likely that the mental health of those for whom the experience of unemployment is not a negative event would be unaffected.

Warr (1984a, cited in Fryer, 1988), for instance, after summarising a body of research about unemployment, concluded that about 15% of unemployed men report an improved physical health and about 5% to 10% report an improvement in their psychological health.

For the majority of people, however, becoming and being unemployed is likely to be a stressful situation that may lead to uncomfortable or undesirable psychological and physical effects. Unemployment may involve not only a loss of income, but the individual's status and valued social roles in society are also likely to be detrimentally affected by the new circumstances (Cutrona & Russell, 1990). Moreover, the value western society confers to work and being

employed is likely to be reflected in the jobless person's lower social position and a diminished sense of self-worth.

In sum, although there may be large individual differences in the way people experience unemployment, it is likely that it will be a negative event for most people with detrimental effects on the individual's physical and psychological health.

Satisfying and/or supportive networks of social relationships, are likely to provide the person with supports and help that will assist him/her to cope better with a stressful event (Auslander, 1988). If the person can better cope with the stress induced by being unemployed, then he/she is more likely to be better protected from the adverse effects it may bring. It is important then, that the unemployed individual does have these sorts of relationships because it is such supports that will enhance the coping mechanisms necessary to cushion him/her from the negative effects of unemployment.

Social supports, be they emotional (e.g., letting someone know he or she is loved and cared for and that help is available if needed) or practical (e.g., offering a car ride to the hospital or a monetary loan), are expected to moderate the stressful circumstances of unemployment and therefore predict better psychological well-being (Bolton & Oatley, 1987; Gore, 1978).

How emotionally and socially lonely the unemployed workers feel was also assessed to explain the link between these variables as well as to explore the effects of loneliness itself on the unemployed's mental health.

The actual relationship between social support and loneliness seems to be such that if a social support network is smaller or less satisfying than a person desires, loneliness may exist (Cutrona, 1982). This means that the qualitative and quantitative features of social support may be related to the experience of loneliness.

Loneliness has been defined as a deficiency in one's social relationships that is subjectively experienced as unpleasant (Peplau & Perlman, 1982). On the other hand, sociao support refers to the function and quality of the beneficial social relationships the person has. This means that if the person does not have a large enough or satisfying enough network of supports to his or her needs, he or she may feel lonely.

Further, studies investigating the relationship between the adequacy of social supports and mental health and loneliness and mental health seem to yield similar kinds of results. For example, Stephens et al. (1978) found that people deprived of adequate supports were found to be more depressed than those who were not. Likewise, Barrera (1981) found that pregnant adolescents with less satisfying support networks were more anxious and depressed. Similarly, loneliness has consistently been found to be strongly associated with deteriorated psychological well-being and depression (Peplau, 1985).

Although there have been only a few studies relating social support to loneliness directly, a number of studies have reported loneliness to be negatively related to perceived social support. This means the higher the level of perceived support by the person, the less lonely he or she is likely to feel.

A study by Gladow and Ray (1986) on social support, loneliness and well-being of low-income, single parents reported strong negative correlations between both loneliness and social support as well as loneliness and happiness. Specifically important to these individuals was the support from friends, neighbours and community to their psychological well-being. Support from relatives was not related with either loneliness or happiness, though it did relate to declines in total problems and isolation. This result in particular may be taken to indicate that family support may not be enough to help the single parents alleviate their feelings of loneliness or make them feel happier. This suggests supports from friends, neighbours and even the community may be more important for the well-being of this particular population.

It should be noted then, that there is a strong relationship between social support and loneliness. However, different populations, let alone individuals, are likely to experience loneliness and or social support deficits in different ways. The present study pays particular attention to how unemployed workers of different marital status relate to these insufficiencies in social support, and how their mental health is (or is not) affected by them.

To achieve this, psychological distress (and related areas), financial stressors, social supports and loneliness levels were assessed and compared in two different ways.

On one hand, three groups of different marital status (never married, married, and divorced and/or separated) were compared for the levels found in the variables studied. This was done because those groups were expected to be

different in their social roles (e.g., responsibilities) and personal characteristics (e.g., age) and therefore experience the effects of unemployment differently.

Additionally, the unemployed participants were divided into groups of individuals who perceived themselves as having high, medium, and low levels of social support. These groups were compared for the levels of loneliness, psychological distress, and financial stressors. In this way, an immediate relationship between the buffering effects of social support (if any) and these variables could be explained.

It was expected that social supports will not only be strongly negatively correlated with feelings of loneliness (the more support, the less lonely and vice-versa), but also that the higher the supports perceived and received, the lower the levels of psychological and financial distress experienced.

With regard to marital group differences, married people are expected to be better supported than both other groups, while divorced and/or separated participants are expected to be the loneliest and/or least supported of all and therefore with the highest levels of psychological and economic distress.

2. METHOD

Participants - Eighty-six individuals participated in this study. These participants were recruited from a pool of unemployed job seekers at the New Zealand Employment Centre. Descriptive statistics for the participants are presented in Table 1. Analysis of these data showed no significant gender differences for age, $F(2,84)=.93$ $p>.05$ or length of unemployment, $F(2,84)=.47$, $p>.05$.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of the participants

	GENDER	
	MALE (n=49)	FEMALE (n=37)
Mean age	27.4 (8.5)	27.7 (10.3)
Mean length of unemployment (months)	14.1 (17.3)	10.7 (19.2)

Standard deviations are shown between the parentheses.

Materials and procedures - The purpose of this study was to examine differences and relationships between the levels of psychological distress (and related symptoms), financial strain and stress, social support, and loneliness among the unemployed participants. A set of standardised instruments designed to assess these variables was administered to each of the participants recruited at the New Zealand Employment Centre. A general background questionnaire was also used to obtain demographic information about the participants. This questionnaire may be seen in Appendix 1.

Each participant answered a questionnaire that contained measures designed to assess the following variables:

Psychological Distress - The participants' perceived amount of psychological distress was assessed by the 30-item General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-30) developed by Goldberg (1972). The instrument was designed to detect minor psychiatric disorders in the general population. The General Health Questionnaire has been shown to be useful in occupational research (Banks, Clegg, Jackson, Kemp, Stafford, & Wall, 1980) and to be valid in respect of more comprehensive psychiatric interviews (Goldberg, 1981). It does not directly identify people as ill, but is so constructed that high scores are likely to be associated with illness. The GHQ-30 comprises 5 subscales designed different aspects of psychological distress. These subscales are: Depression and Anxiety, Sleep and wakefulness, Observable Personal Behaviours Related to One's Self, Observable Personal Behaviours Related To Others, and Inadequacy, Tension, and Temper Symptoms. The GHQ-30 is presented in Appendix 2.

Financial Strain - One question was used to assess level of financial strain or financial worries perceived by the participants. This measure consisted of the question "Thinking back over the past month, how often have you had serious financial worries?". This item has been previously used with success by Warr and Jackson (1985) to measure financial strain in the unemployed.

Financial stress - This measure comprises questions related to the participants' available financial resources for seven different necessities of living. These necessities are a suitable home, furniture/household equipment, car, food,

medical care, clothing, and leisure activities. This questionnaire was created by Feather (1989) and can be found in Appendix 3.

Social Support - Two questionnaires were used to measure the participants' perceived levels of social support.

1) The Medical Outcomes Study (MOS) Social Support Survey (Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991). This measure was designed to assess the multiple dimensions of social support available to help individuals cope with the stresses of life. Two types of measures can be obtained through the use of this survey. A structural support measure that assesses the number of close friends, relatives the participant has. Although this measure assesses the number of structural supports available to an individual, it does not assess the individual's satisfaction with the support offered. For example, having a partner or spouse may not necessarily mean having a good source of support. A separate item, included in the general background set of questions, required the participants to rate their satisfaction with the number of relationships they had.

Five types of functional support, or interpersonal relations, were also measured by the MOS. These 5 subscales were designed to measure the participants' perceived levels of Emotional Support - thao is, if the individuals perceives themselves to have someone to listen to them and to confide in; Informational Support - or the availability of someone to provide information, advice, and guidance; Affectionate Support - which measures the participants' perceived expressions of love and affection available to them; Tangible Support -involves the provision of material aid or assistance; and Positive Social Interaction - which refers to the availability of others persons to have fun and recreation.

Finally, an overall index of perceived social support was also obtained by adding up the scores for the five individual functional support measures. A copy of this instrument may be found in Appendix 4.

It can be seen that functional support measures refer to the degree to which a person perceives his/her interpersonal relationships serve particular functions. These perceptions, however, may or may not be correlated with structural support measures. For example, being a church group member (structural measure) may or may not lead to having more emotional support (functional measure). Functional support measures would be expected to provide better predictors of health and health behaviours, Cohen & Syme, (1985). Likewise, these measures are also likely to show the buffering effects of social support.

2) The second measure of social support is the Multi-Dimensional Support Scale (MDSS) developed by Winefield, Winefield, and Tiggermann (1992). This survey was used to obtain measures of the perceived frequency and adequacy of emotional, instrumental, and informational supportive behaviours from three different sources of social support. This instrument was used to measure the degree of support perceived to be offered by the participants' friends and family, their peers (other unemployed people), and the New Zealand Employment Centre. The main objective for using the MDSS was to assess the sources of social support and how adequate is the support given by those providers. A copy of this instrument may also be found in Appendix 5.

Loneliness - Three different scales were used to determine a general, or overall, estimate of the participants' loneliness, how emotionally lonely they felt themselves to be, and how socially lonely they perceived themselves to be.

The UCLA Loneliness Revised Scale (UCLA) (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980) was used to obtain an overall index of loneliness. This scale is the most widely used instrument to assess loneliness and has been shown to be valid in both identifying loneliness and discriminating between loneliness and other related complaints. This scale may be seen in Appendix 6.

Emotional Loneliness and Social Loneliness: Wittenberg (1986) has created two measures to assess these specific types of loneliness. Based on Weiss' typology of loneliness (1973, 1974), Wittenberg defined emotional loneliness as the condition resulting from the lack of a close, intimate attachment to another person. Individuals who have recently been divorced, widowed, or ended a dating relationship should experience this form of loneliness. Emotional loneliness leads to feelings of anxiety and isolation. In contrast, social loneliness is thought to occur from the lack of a network of social relationships in which the person is part of a group of friends who share common interests and activities. Individuals who have recently moved to a new environment (e.g. to a new city, job, or university) should experience this form of loneliness. Social loneliness is characterised by feelings of boredom, aimlessness, and marginality. Both emotional and social loneliness scales may be seen in Appendix 7.

Taken together, these measures in this questionnaire were expected to produce an assessment of the participants' levels of psychological and economic distress, their levels of perceived and received support, as well as their feelings of loneliness. It was expected that those participants who had the lowest levels of social support would show the greatest degrees of loneliness and dissatisfaction with their unemployment.

3. RESULTS

Preliminary analysis showed there were no significant differences between males and females in the sample for the variables examined. Therefore, no further gender difference analyses were conducted. This series of preliminary analyses also revealed significant differences on the various tests between never-married, married, and divorced/separated participants. It should be noted that not all participants completed every item in each survey. In these cases, the participant's data were excluded from that particular analysis, but were included in subsequent analyses, where appropriate. Descriptive statistics for these three groups of participants are presented in Table 2. Analysis of these data revealed a significant different in age between the three groups, $F(2,83) = 27.75$, $p<.05$, but no significant difference in length of unemployment, $F(2,83) = 5.37$, $p>.05$.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics of the never-married, married, and divorced/separated participants.

	MARITAL STATUS		
	NEVER-MARRIED (n=64)	MARRIED (n=12)	DIVORCED/SEPARATED (n=10)
Mean age	24.1 (6.5)	38.2 (10.5)	36.1 (8.4)
Mean length of unemployment (in months)	11.4 (17.5)	16.4 (23.9)	15.8 (15.1)

Standard deviations are shown between the parentheses.

3.1 PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

The participants' perceived levels of psychological distress, as measured by the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-30) developed by Goldberg (1972), are presented in Table 3. These data represent the participants' mean level of overall psychological distress as well as their level of distress on specific subscales of the GHQ-30.

Table 3

Mean levels (and standard deviations) on the GHQ-30 questionnaire for never-married, married, and divorced/separated participants

	MARITAL STATUS		
	NEVER-MARRIED (n=64)	MARRIED (n=12)	DIVORCED/SEPARATED (n=10)
Overall Psychological Distress	30.0 (16.1)	39.5 (15.6)	46.4 (18.7)
Depression/Anxiety	7.7 (6.1)	11.9 (6.8)	13.8 (5.9)
Sleep Disturbance	2.0 (1.7)	2.4 (1.3)	3.6 (1.9)
Observed Personal Behaviour	5.2 (2.5)	6.0 (2.4)	6.5 (4.1)
Behaviour towards Others	2.9 (1.8)	2.9 (1.5)	5.1 (2.2)
Inadequacy/Tension	10.8 (6.0)	14.7 (5.9)	15.9 (5.7)

The participants' self-ratings on each of these measures were examined with a series of one-factor (marital status) analyses of variance. Where appropriate, post hoc comparisons were conducted using a modified Bonferroni multiple range test ($p < .05$).

Analysis of the Overall Psychological Distress scores of the never married, married, and divorced participants on the GHQ-30 showed a significant difference between the three groups, $F(2,83)=5.26$, $p<.01$. Post hoc comparisons revealed the never-married group to have significantly lower levels of psychological distress that the divorced/separated individuals, while the mean distress level of the married group was not significantly different from those of the other two groups.

Analysis of the Depression/Anxiety symptoms subscale of the GHQ-30 also showed a significant difference between the three groups of participants, $F(2,83)=5.46$, $p<.01$. Post hoc comparisons showed never-married participants to have significantly lower scores from those of the divorced/separated participants. Again, the mean scores of the married participants were not significantly different from those of the other two groups.

The analysis of the results of the Sleep Disturbance subscale of the GHQ-30 also showed significant differences between the three groups of participants, $F(2,83)=3.56$, $p<.05$. Post hoc comparisons showed the divorced/separated group to have significantly greater levels of sleep disturbance than the never-married group. Again, the scores of the married participants did not differ from those of the other two groups.

Analysis of the participants' mean scores on the Inadequacy/Tension subscale of the GHQ-30 also showed a significant difference between the participants' self-ratings on this measure, $F(2,83)=4.50$, $p<.05$. Once again, post hoc analysis revealed a similar trend showing the divorced/separated group to have significantly higher levels of inadequacy/tension than the never-married

participants. The married participants' scores were not significantly different from the other groups.

Two of the subscales of the GHQ were used to assess different aspects of the participants' patterns of behaviour. One of these subscales examined aspects of the participants' personal behaviour that related to their daily activities. Analysis of the results of this subscale revealed no significant differences between the groups on this measure, $F(2,83)=1.09$, $p>.05$. Analysis of the participants' scores on the subscale examining their behaviours towards other people, however, did show significant differences between the three groups, $F(2,83)=6.10$, $p<.005$. Post hoc analysis showed the divorced/separated participants' to have lower levels of positive interactions with other people than either the never-married or the married groups of participants.

3.2 FINANCIAL STRESS AND STRAIN

Two measures were used to assess the degree of financial strain (worries) and financial stress (the amount of money available to provide for one's basic material needs, such as food, clothing, rent, etc.) perceived by the participants. The participants' mean scores on these two measures are presented in Table 4

Table 4

Mean levels (and standard deviations) of Financial Strain and Financial Stress for never-married, married, and divorced/separated participants

	MARITAL STATUS		
	NEVER-MARRIED (n=64)	MARRIED (n=12)	DIVORCED/SEPARATED (n=10)
Financial Strain	2.9 (1.3)	3.5 (1.0)	4.1 (0.8)
Financial Stress	33.6 (9.2)	30.6 (12.3)	41.0 (9.6)

These two sets of data were also examined with one-factor (marital status) analyses of variance. The first analysis revealed a significant difference between the participants' perceived levels of financial strain, $F(2,83)=4.17$, $p<.05$. Post hoc comparisons revealed the divorced/separated group to have significantly greater levels of financial strain than the never-married group. Married participants' financial strain scores did not differ significantly from those of the other two groups.

Analysis of the financial stress scores showed a significant difference between the three groups of participants, $F(2,83)=3.29$, $p<.05$. Post hoc comparisons showed the married participants to have significantly lower levels of financial stress than the divorced/separated participants. The never-married participants' level of financial stress was not significantly different the other groups.

3.3 SOCIAL SUPPORT

The participants results from the MOS Social Support Survey (Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991), which measures structural and functional forms of support, are presented in Table 5. These data represent the mean level of the participants' structural support network or the perceived amount of functional support available to them.

Table 5

Mean scores (and standard deviations) of the structural support networks and perceived availability of functional support for never-married, married, and divorced/separated participants

	MARITAL STATUS		
	NEVER-MARRIED (n=64)	MARRIED (n=12)	DIVORCED/SEPARATED (n=10)
STRUCTURAL SUPPORT			
Number of close friends/family	7.2 (6.2)	7.8 (7.1)	3.6 (6.6)
Satisfaction with number of relationships	3.2 (1.1)	3.5 (1.1)	2.7 (0.9)
FUNCTIONAL SUPPORT			
Overall level of Support	67.8 (18.0)	73.0 (14.4)	51.3 (15.2)
Emotional Support	14.1 (4.3)	15.9 (3.2)	11.9 (4.6)
Informational Support	14.2 (4.1)	14.0 (3.4)	12.2 (3.7)
Affectionate Support	10.0 (3.7)	12.5 (4.0)	6.9 (3.0)
Tangible Support	14.2 (4.2)	15.5 (4.0)	9.7 (3.6)
Positive interaction	14.7 (4.2)	15.0 (4.0)	10.6 (3.6)

There were no significant differences between the three groups' number of close friends/family or their levels of satisfaction with the number of relationships, $F(2,78) = 1.47$, $p>.05$, and $F(2,83)=1.64$, $p>.05$, respectively.

The Overall Index of Social Support was obtained by adding together the scores for the different types of functional support measures. One factor (martial status) analysis of variance revealed significant differences between

the three groups, $F(2,83)=4.90$, $p<.01$. Post hoc comparisons revealed the divorced/separated group perceived themselves to have was significantly lower levels of overall functional support from the never-married and married groups. These latter two groups did not differ significantly.

Analysis of the participants' perceived levels of emotional support indicated no significant differences between them, $F(2,83)=2.47$, $p> .05$. Likewise, analysis of the participants' perceived levels of informational support also revealed no significant difference between any of the three groups , $F(2,83)=1.32$, $p>.05$.

Analysis of the participants' perceived levels of affectionate support showed a significant difference was found between the three groups, $F(2,83)=6.95$, $p<.05$. Post hoc analysis indicated the divorced/separated group had significantly lower levels of affectionate support than either the never-married and the married groups. Never-married and married participants were not significantly different from each other.

A significant difference between the participants' perceived levels of tangible support was also found, $F(2,83)=5.80$, $p<.05$. Post hoc analysis revealed the divorced/separated group had significantly lower levels of tangible support that either the married or the never-married groups. Again, these latter two groups were not significantly different from each other.

Analysis of the participants' levels of Positive Interaction showed a significant difference between the three marital groups, $F(2,83)=4.58$, $p<.05$. Post hoc analysis revealed the divorced/separated group to have lower levels of Positive Interactions than either of the other two groups. Again, the married and the never-married levels of perceived support did not differ.

The participants' results from the Multi-Dimensional Support Scale, (Winefield et al., 1992), which measures emotional, informational and tangible forms of support from family, peers, and the New Zealand Employment Service (NZES), are presented in Table 6. These data represent the participants' mean perceived levels of support obtained from each of these sources.

Table 6

Mean levels (and standard deviations) of the never-married, married, and divorced/separated participants' perceived support from family, peers and New Zealand Employment Service

	MARITAL STATUS		
	NEVER-MARRIED (n=64)	MARRIED (n=12)	DIVORCED/SEPARATED (n=10)
SUPPORT FROM FAMILY/FRIENDS			
Total Support	17.7 (4.1)	19.4 (4.6)	14.1 (4.6)
Emotional Support	9.2 (2.2)	10.2 (2.2)	7.6 (2.7)
Tangible Support	5.6 (1.6)	6.0 (1.6)	4.2 (1.7)
Informational Support	2.8 (0.8)	3.0 (1.0)	2.3 (0.8)
SUPPORT FROM PEERS			
Total Support	11.9 (3.4)	12.1 (3.5)	10.1 (3.4)
Emotional Support	5.0(1.6)	5.6 (1.4)	4.2 (1.0)
Tangible Support	4.4 (1.6)	4.0 (1.8)	3.6 (1.8)
Informational Support	2.4 (0.8)	2.4 (0.6)	2.1 (0.9)
SUPPORT FROM NZES			
Total Support	13.4 (3.9)	12.2 (4.1)	10.7 (5.1)
Emotional Support	5.4 (1.7)	5.0 (1.8)	4.5 (2.0)
Tangible Support	5.1 (1.6)	4.5 (1.7)	4.2 (2.0)
Informational Support	2.7 (0.9)	2.6 (0.7)	2.0 (1.1)

A significant difference between the groups' perceived levels of total support received from family and close friends, $F(2,83)=4.37$, $p<.05$. Post hoc testing showed the divorced/separated group had significantly lower levels of perceived support than the other groups. The never-married and the married participants were not significantly different from each other.

Analysis for perceived emotional support from family/friends revealed a significant difference between the groups, $F(2,83)=3.60$, $p<.05$. Post hoc analysis showed that the divorced/separated group to have significantly lower levels of perceived emotional support from the married group but not from never-married group. The latter two groups did not differ from each other.

Likewise, a significant difference between the groups was found for their perceived levels of tangible support from friends and family, $F(2,83)=4.18$, $p<.05$. Post hoc testing indicated the divorced/separated group had significantly lower levels of perceived support than either of the other groups. Again, the never-married and married groups did not significantly differ. Lastly, no significant difference between groups was found for the levels of informational support provided by family and friends, $F(2,83)=2.19$, $p>.05$.

No significant difference between the groups was found in the overall levels of perceived support received from the unemployed's peers (other unemployed), $F(2,80)=1.34$, $p>.05$. Further, analyses for the three forms of support given by peers revealed no significant differences between the marital groups for emotional support, $F(2,82)=2.18$, $p>.05$, tangible support, $F(2,80)=1.00$, $p>.05$, or for informational support, $F(2,82)=.76$, $p>.05$.

Similarly, no significant difference was found between the marital groups' perceived levels of overall support received from the NZES, $F(2,83)=2.05$, $p>.05$. The analyses of individual forms of support given to the unemployed by the NZES also showed no differences between any of the groups on measures of emotional support, $F(2,83)=1.43$, $p>.05$; tangible support, $F(2,83)=1.80$, $p>.05$; or informational support, $F(2,83)=2.82$, $p>.05$.

3.4 LONELINESS

The mean scores of the never-married, married, and divorced/separated participants for both the UCLA Overall Index of Loneliness as well as the Emotional and Social Loneliness scales developed by Wittenberg (1986) are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Mean scores (and standard deviations) of the loneliness scales for never-married, married, and divorced/separated participants

	MARITAL STATUS		
	NEVER-MARRIED (n=64)	MARRIED (n=12)	DIVORCED/SEPARATED (n=10)
Overall Loneliness	47.5 (13.6)	52.0 (15.0)	59.3 (11.1)
Emotional Loneliness	14.4 (4.0)	10.6 (5.3)	17.6 (2.8)
Social Loneliness	11.7 (4.3)	12.6 (3.1)	15.2 (3.0)

One factor (marital status) analysis of variance of the Overall Index of Loneliness scores revealed a significant difference between the three groups,

$F(2,83)=3.52$, $p<.05$. Post hoc analysis showed the divorced/separated group to have significantly higher levels of loneliness from the never-married group. The married group was not significantly different from either of the other two groups.

Both the participants' Emotional Loneliness and Social Loneliness scores were also examined with one factor (marital status) analyses of variance. Analysis of the participants' emotional loneliness scores revealed a significant difference between the three groups, $F(2,83)=7.83$, $p<.001$. Post hoc analysis showed the married group of participants to have significantly lower degrees of emotional loneliness than either the never-married or the divorced/separated participants. The latter two groups did not differ from each other.

Finally, analysis of the participants' social loneliness scores revealed a significant difference between the three groups, $F(2,83)=3.14$, $p<.05$. Post hoc analysis revealed the never- married group had significantly lower levels of social loneliness than the divorced/separated participants, but not from the married participants. The scores of the married participants were not significantly different from those of the divorced/separated participants.

3.5 PATTERNS OF CORRELATIONS

A series of correlational analyses was carried out to determine the manner in which the participants' perceptions of distress were related. Additionally, correlational analyses were performed to determine the relationship between the participants' sources of support and their perceived amounts of support. Lastly, a third series of correlational analyses was performed to determine the relationship between participants' levels of distress and their perceived sources

and types of support. The results of these correlational analyses are presented in Tables 8, 9, and 10.

Table 8

Correlations between types of distress for all participants

	ECONOMIC DISTRESS		LONELINESS		
	Financial Strain	Financial Stress	Overall	Social	Emotional
SYMPTOMS OF DISTRESS					
Psychological Distress	.41**	.37**	.63**	.45**	.26*
Depression/Anxiety	.37**	.27**	.63**	.42**	.26*
Sleep Disturbance	.47**	.33**	.43**	.32**	.22*
Personal Behaviours	.19	.22*	.41**	.32**	.22*
Behaviours towards Others	.03	.18	.52**	.40**	.21*
Inadequacy/Tension	.47**	.39**	.58**	.40**	.21**

*Significant at p<.05, **Significant at p<.01 (all with 84 degrees of freedom)

Table 9

Correlations between sources of support and types of support for all participants

	SOURCES OF SUPPORT		
	Family	Peers	NZES
TYPES OF SUPPORT			
Overall	.68**	.36**	.17
Emotional	.68**	.36**	.20
Informational	.71**	.44**	.27*
Tangible	.50**	.16	.15
Affectionate	.53**	.20	.01
Positive Interaction	.50**	.36**	.09

*Significant at p<.05, **Significant at p<.01 (all with 84 degrees of freedom, except peer support which has 81)

Table 10

Correlations between sources of support, types of support, distress and loneliness for all participants

	SOURCES OF SUPPORT			TYPES OF SUPPORT					
	Family	Peers	NZES	Overall	Emotional	Informational	Tangible	Affectionate	Positive interaction
SYMPTOMS OF DISTRESS									
Distress	-.25**	-.12	-.01	-.45**	-.37**	-.43**	-.20	-.41**	-.53**
Depression/ Anxiety	-.20	-.10	.00	-.43**	-.34**	-.39**	-.19	-.40**	-.52**
Sleep Disturbance	-.24*	-.21*	.01	-.39**	-.30**	-.35**	-.21*	-.41**	-.39**
Personal Behaviours	-.18	-.05	.04	-.31**	-.25*	-.24*	-.14	-.26*	-.39**
Behaviour towards Others	-.33**	-.11	-.04	-.42**	-.42**	-.41**	-.22*	-.34**	-.43**
Inadequacy/ Tension	-.22*	-.10	-.06	-.39**	-.32**	-.40**	-.16	-.32**	-.46**
ECONOMIC DISTRESS									
Financial Strain	-.20	-.12	-.03	-.24*	-.20	-.29**	-.13	-.27**	-.15
Financial Stress	-.23*	.00	-.15	-.31**	-.27**	-.26*	-.26*	-.34**	-.20
LONELINESS									
Overall	-.54**	-.23*	-.17	-.71**	-.64**	-.67**	-.46**	-.58**	-.70**
Social	-.54**	-.20	-.21*	-.69**	-.64**	-.64**	-.49**	-.50**	-.69**
Emotional	-.39**	-.23*	-.01	-.54**	-.46**	-.44**	-.35**	-.56**	-.52**

*Significant at $p<.05$, **Significant at $p<.01$ (all with 84 degrees of freedom, except peer support which has 81)

The results of these analyses show that, in general, the participants' sources of distress all show a high degree of association indicating that participants with distress in one area of their life are likely to feel distress in many aspects of life. Moreover, the analyses also showed the participants' types and sources of support also have a high degree of association indicating that if they receive support from one source, they are likely to receive support from other areas as well.

Further, a series of negative correlations between some measures of psychological distress and support received from the participants' family and close friends showed the participants' low overall levels of distress, low levels of sleep disturbances, and low amount of negative behaviour towards others were all related to the high amount of support they received from their family. Additionally, participants' low levels of sleep disturbance were also associated with high levels of support received from their peers. Further, analyses revealed the participants' types of perceived support were also negatively correlated with their levels of distress, suggesting that most types of support were successful in mitigating their levels of distress. It should be noted, however, the support from the NZES was not associated with the mitigation of distress.

Although the results of the correlational analysis strongly suggest the importance of one's family in providing support, it should also be recognised that the perceived amount of overall support available is also important to maintain an individual's physiological health by serving as a buffer against various forms of distress (Cohen & Wills, 1985, Wethington & Kessler, 1986).

To examine the effects of perceived amount of support, the unemployed participants were divided into groups who had Low levels of overall perceived social support (mean score between 27 and 49, n=16), Medium levels of overall perceived social support (mean between 50 and 72, n=34), and High levels of overall perceived social support (mean between 73 and 95, n=36). The mean levels of psychological distress, economic distress, and loneliness in these three groups are presented in Tables 11, 12, and 13. These data were examined with a series of one factor (group) analyses of variance. Appropriate post hoc comparisons were again conducted with a Bonferroni multiple range tests ($p<.05$).

Table 11

Mean levels (and standard deviations) on the GHQ-30 questionnaire for participants with low, medium, and high levels of perceived social support

	LEVELS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT		
	LOW (n=16)	MEDIUM (n=34)	HIGH (n=36)
Overall Psychological Distress	49.9 (19.1)	33.7 (15.4)	25.4 (12.2)
Depression/Anxiety	15.4 (6.4)	8.9 (6.5)	6.3 (4.5)
Sleep Disturbance	3.7 (1.9)	2.2 (1.6)	1.6 (1.4)
Observed Personal Behaviour	7.1 (3.5)	5.7 (2.7)	4.5 (1.9)
Behaviour towards Others	5.0 (2.5)	3.1 (1.7)	2.3 (1.2)
Inadequacy/Tension	16.9 (7.0)	12.1 (5.5)	9.5 (5.2)

Table 12

Mean levels (and standard deviations) of Financial Strain and Financial Stress for participants with low, medium, and high levels of perceived support

	LEVELS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT		
	LOW (n=16)	MEDIUM (n=34)	HIGH (n=36)
Financial Strain	3.6 (1.2)	3.3 (1.2)	2.8 (1.2)
Financial Stress	40.3 (8.8)	34.3 (10.2)	31.0 (9.2)

Table 13

Mean scores (and standard deviations) of loneliness scores for participants with low, medium, and high levels of perceived support

	LEVELS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT		
	LOW (n=16)	MEDIUM (n=34)	HIGH (n=36)
Overall Loneliness	66.3 (8.2)	52.0 (10.0)	39.6 (10.6)
Emotional Loneliness	18.0 (3.4)	15.0 (3.1)	11.8 (4.6)
Social Loneliness	17.3 (3.4)	12.5 (3.0)	9.8 (3.2)

These analyses revealed a significant difference between the participants' levels of Psychological distress (shown in Table 11), $F(2,83)=14.82$, $p<.01$; Depression/anxiety, $F(2,83)=13.74$, $p<.01$; Inadequacy/tension, $F(2,83)=9.07$, $p<.01$; Personal observed behaviours, $F(2,83)= 5.82$, $p< .01$; Behaviour related towards others, $F(2,83)=13.02$, $p<.01$; and Sleep Disturbance, $F(2,83)=9.71$, $p<.01$. Post hoc testing revealed that in all cases the participants with low levels of perceived overall social support had significantly higher levels of distress and disturbance that did participants from the other two groups. The mean level of distress and disturbance was the same in the groups with high and medium levels of perceived social support in all cases except for that of personal observed behaviours. In this case, the participants with medium levels of perceived social support did not differ from either of the other two groups.

Economic distress factors such as financial strain (worries) and financial stress (non-availability of money for necessary essentials) levels (as shown in Table 12) were also compared for the groups with high, medium, and low perceived social support. One factor (group) analysis of variance for financial strain showed there was no significant difference between the three groups, $F(2,83)=4.25$, $p>.05$.

Analysis of the participants' level of financial stress was also examined with a one factor (group) analysis of variance. This analysis found a difference between the three groups, $F(2,83)=5.18$, $p< .01$. Post hoc analysis showed the low perceived social support group to experience significantly higher levels of financial stress than those in the high overall perceived social support group.

The medium overall perceived social support group was not significantly different from the other two groups.

The differences in the participants' mean levels of loneliness (shown in Table 13) were also assessed through a series of one factor (group) analyses of variance. These analyses revealed a significant difference between the three groups in terms of the Overall index of loneliness, $F(2,83)=41.31$, $p<.01$; Social loneliness, $F(2,83)=29.85$, $p<.01$; and Emotional loneliness; $F(2,83)=16.03$, $p<.01$. Post hoc analyses revealed that all three groups had significantly different levels of loneliness as measured by each of the three scales. In all cases, the participants with the lowest levels of perceived social support had higher levels of loneliness while the participants with high levels of perceived social support had the lowest levels of loneliness.

Again, a series of correlational analyses were carried out to determine the manner in which social support and distress were related in the individuals who had different perceived levels of social support. The results of these analyses are presented in Tables 14, 15, and 16.

Table 14

Correlations between sources of support, types of support and of distress for participants with low levels of perceived social support

	SOURCES OF SUPPORT			TYPES OF SUPPORT					
	Family	Peers	NZES	Overall	Emotional	Informational	Tangible	Affectionate	Positive interaction
SYMPTOMS OF DISTRESS									
Distress	.17	.56*	.34	.05	.20	.28	.07	-.20	-.12
Depression/ Anxiety	.12	.64*	.31	.03	.15	.24	.13	-.33	-.09
Sleep Disturbance	.11	.58*	.31	.27	.36	.15	.25	-.05	.07
Personal Behaviours	.29	.24	.36	.00	.09	.50*	-.16	.04	-.25
Behaviour towards Others	.09	.15	.23	.16	.10	.30	.17	-.01	-.01
Inadequacy/ Tension	.09	.54*	.22	.00	.18	.11	.03	-.21	-.11
ECONOMIC DISTRESS									
Financial Strain	.14	.40	-.02	.18	.08	.14	.29	.06	.00
Financial Stress	-.13	.18	-.29	-.15	.00	-.12	-.22	-.21	-.03
LONELINESS									
Overall	.19	.40	.54*	-.02	.05	.32	.22	-.50*	-.21
Social	.30	-.05	.32	-.28	.01	.01	.00	-.27	-.57*
Emotional	.04	.09	.30	.15	.07	.07	.15	.08	.15

*Significant at $p<.05$, **Significant at $p<.01$ (all with 14 degrees of freedom, except peer support which has 12).

Table 15

Correlations between sources of support, types of support and of distress for participants with medium levels of perceived social support

	SOURCES OF SUPPORT			TYPES OF SUPPORT					
	Family	Peers	NZES	Overall	Emotional	Informational	Tangible	Affectionate	Positive interaction
SYMPTOMS OF DISTRESS									
Distress	.13	.00	.08	.09	.10	-.08	.32	.14	-.36*
Depression/ Anxiety	.23	.01	.06	.14	.19	.00	.33	.09	-.37*
Sleep Disturbance	.15	-.37*	.34	.13	.20	.07	.20	-.03	-.22
Personal Behaviours	-.06	.09	-.01	.00	.00	-.04	.13	.05	-.20
Behaviour towards Others	-.18	.17	-.02	-.04	-.18	-.18	.11	.22	-.08
Inadequacy/ Tension	.11	.03	.06	.04	.05	-.17	.30	.22	-.36*
ECONOMIC DISTRESS									
Financial Strain	.05	-.15	.17	-.21	-.06	-.24	-.01	-.21	.03
Financial Stress	-.14	.10	-.12	-.02	-.20	-.13	.01	.02	.22
LONELINESS									
Overall	-.09	-.10	-.30	-.26	-.14	-.30	.00	.41*	-.47**
Social	-.32	-.08	-.41*	-.33	-.24	-.29	-.13	.40*	-.38*
Emotional	-.04	-.16	-.09	-.19	.11	.02	-.08	-.28	-.22

*Significant at p<.05, **Significant at p<.01 (all with 32 degrees of freedom)

Table 16

Correlations between sources of support, types of support and of distress for participants with high levels of perceived social support

	SOURCES OF SUPPORT				TYPES OF SUPPORT				
	Family	Peers	NZES	Overall	Emotional	Information al	Tangible	Affectionate	Positive interaction
SYMPTOMS OF DISTRESS									
Distress	.05	-.12	-.14	-.03	.03	-.06	.16	-.02	-.17
Depression/ Anxiety	.13	-.04	-.03	-.01	.05	-.01	.10	-.01	-.13
Sleep Disturbance	-.10	-.10	-.32*	-.22	-.12	-.17	-.07	-.29	-.06
Personal Behaviours	-.01	-.09	.00	.13	.12	.03	.33*	.08	-.12
Behaviour towards Others	.05	-.13	-.04	.08	.10	.03	.20	.06	-.15
Inadequacy/ Tension	.01	-.17	-.22	-.08	-.02	-.10	.12	-.03	-.19
ECONOMIC DISTRESS									
Financial Strain	-.32	-.11	-.18	-.10	-.02	-.25	-.03	-.12	.11
Financial Stress	.19	.13	.00	.04	.25	.33*	-.07	-.36*	.00
LONELINESS									
Overall	-.35*	-.03	-.22	-.30	-.24	-.30	-.02	-.23	-.27
Social	-.44**	.13	-.16	-.37*	-.39*	-.38*	-.13	-.16	-.25
Emotional	-.13	-.09	.07	-.28	-.23	-.02	.00	-.38*	-.38*

*Significant at $p<.05$, **Significant at $p<.01$ (all with 34 degrees of freedom, except peer support which has 33).

These analyses showed the participants with low levels of perceived support to have significant positive correlations between the support they received from their peers and symptoms of distress. Additionally, this same group of participants showed significant negative correlations between their levels of overall loneliness and their perceived amount of affectionate support. Further, there were also significant negative correlations between their social loneliness scores and their number of positive interactions. This could be taken to indicate that these individuals may seek aid from their peers when faced with psychological distress and that their feelings of social and overall loneliness are mitigated by these encounters.

In contrast, participants with medium levels of perceived social support showed almost no significant correlations between their support and their distress. The exception to this are the correlations between their levels of loneliness and their affectionate support and positive interactions. These participants had positive correlations between their perceived amount of affectionate support and both their overall and social loneliness scores, but negative correlations between their positive interactions and both their overall and social loneliness scores. This would suggest that these participants may seek affectionate support when confronted by feelings of loneliness and these feelings may be mitigated by their amount of positive interactions.

Lastly, participants with high levels of perceived social support also showed few significant correlations between their measures of support and distress. The notable exceptions to this, however, are the negative correlations between these participants' feelings of social loneliness and their family support and the

negative correlations between their feelings of emotional loneliness and perceived amounts of affectionate support and positive interactions. This would suggest that these participants' low levels of social loneliness are associated with the high levels of support they receive from their family. Moreover, these same participants' low feelings of emotional loneliness seem to be associated with the amount of affectionate support and positive interactions they perceive themselves to have.

4. DISCUSSION

This study has explored the relationships between psychological distress, social support, and loneliness levels in unemployed workers. The results have, in two ways, given tentative evidence that social support from one's family may benefit the unemployed.

The finding that unemployed individuals who were either divorced or separated displayed greater levels of psychological distress and loneliness strongly indicates the value of having social support to relieve the stresses associated with this aspect of life. Never-married and married participants, however, experienced significantly higher levels of received and perceived social support. Further, never-married and married individuals were also less socially and emotionally lonely than the divorced/separated participants.

A similar trend showing the importance of social support was observed when the participants were divided into three groups based on their levels of perceived social support. Those with the lowest levels of perceived available support were consistently found to be not only more lonely, but also experiencing higher levels of psychological and economic distress. This trend was particularly strong in the variables related to psychological distress. That is, the lower the level of perceived available support, the higher the level of psychological distress, depression/anxiety, and inadequacy/tension. Likewise, personal behaviour and behaviours related to others were worse or less frequent, while sleep patterns were more disturbed in those who had lower levels of perceived social support.

The significance of access to social contacts is emphasised in both Jahoda's (1982) and Warr's (1987a,b) theories of unemployment. Both Jahoda and Warr refer to the loss of contact with other workers unemployed people experience as one of the causalities of psychological impairment. According to these researchers the individual who loses his/her job is likely to lose contact with their former co-workers. Losing contact with co-workers is in itself likely to be conducive to loneliness, especially if the person does not have a supportive and/or large network of friendships outside of the work setting. Moreover, the former co-workers would have been likely to be the main providers of distinct types of supports that would be beneficial to the person. For example, Weiss (1974) found that the skills and abilities the person has are primarily likely to be acknowledged by his/her co-workers (this type of support is called Reassurance of Worth). In addition, this specific type of support has been found to yield strong significant buffering effects on the individual's levels of depression (lowering them) and self-esteem (enhancing it) (Mallinckrodt & Bennett, 1992).

It could therefore be argued that people with low social support may experience unemployment (and its stresses) in a different way than do individuals with higher levels of social support. That is, divorced/separated individuals may experience different types of psychological distress, financial worries and stress, and loneliness than do people who are married. In the light of the findings presented in this study, it may be concluded that it is essential for unemployed people with few social supports to have the opportunity for interpersonal contact. Such contact reduces feelings of loneliness and allows

the individual to receive support necessary to maintain their levels of physical and psychological health and to attain their goals.

In sum, the more contact people have with others will increase opportunities to be supported and validated as a person. The more supportive those relationships are (or at least perceived to be), the less lonely individuals will perceive themselves to be, with consequent betterment in their social lives and psychological well-being. Particularly relevant to the unemployeds' mental health is the necessity of having a low degree of social loneliness and frequent positive interactions. Both of these factors are conducive to opportunities to share interests, activities and also the problems and vicissitudes an unemployed person undergoes as well as opportunities to relax and get one's mind off them.

It should be noted that these findings relate only to the amount of social support that the participants' perceive to be available to them and not the actual amount of social support given to them. These results are consistent with Wethington and Kessler's (1986) findings that emphasise the perception of available social support is actually more important than the objective amount of support given. Moreover, Cohen and Wills (1985) also suggest that received social support will be beneficial only if it matches the perceived needs of the stressed individual. The finding that only social support received from one's family and friends, but not the NZES, was significantly correlated with lower levels of distress in unemployed participants provides confirmation for this point.

However, the levels of financial strain (worries) experienced by the participants were not significantly affected by the levels of perceived social support. This was an important finding in that it indicates that irrespective of how much overall support the unemployed feels he or she has, the person will still experience a high level of financial worrying that may be detrimental to his/her psychological health. This finding confirms Warr's (1987a,b) view that one of the environmental "vitamins" the unemployed lack is availability of money, which results in frequent worrying over financial matters. Although this study did not examine whether the person was in debt, needed to borrow money, sell their possessions or was having trouble keeping up with payments, it was clear that their level of financial stress was very high and the majority could not afford the daily expenses necessary for appropriate living conditions. High positive correlations between both financial strain (worries), financial stress (non-availability of money) and psychological distress provide some measure of corroboration for Warr's position.

Jahoda's (1982) model, on the other hand, emphasises latent, non-economic consequences of unemployment such as the loss of social contact, activity, status, purposefulness and time structure as the main causes of the detrimental effects in the unemployed's health. Because of this, the idea of non-availability of money alone being closely related to the psychological well-being of the unemployed seems somewhat discrepant with her theory. Maslow (1970) suggested basic material needs have to be first fulfilled (i.e., the person and his/her family must have access to appropriate food, clothing and accommodation) as a minimum requisite for him/her to be expected to attain and maintain an acceptable level of physical and mental health. This means

that the unemployed person should be sufficiently financially supported in order for him/her to have fulfil these minimal necessities, otherwise they may become obsessed with financial concerns and neglect their psychological well-being.

Further, it should be kept in mind that many jobs may not even provide an appropriate earning to accomplish those minimum requirements. In addition, some jobs may not necessarily provide the person with an opportunity to gain social status or even increase or improve the amount or quality of social contacts. Jahoda seems to take for granted that those positive occurrences of employment such as enforced activity, social contacts, collective purposes, time structure and social status will happen irrespective of how unsatisfying the job may be and she even presumes that any job is better than no job.

In my view, the majority of people work because they need money and although being employed may lead to satisfying social relationships and opportunities of self-realisation that benefit the individual's psychological well-being, it is the income the job brings that provides an acceptable standard of living and basic feelings of security and control in life.

Further research on the specific effects of financial supports to the unemployed may help determine more clearly how much their psychological well-being is affected by the lack of money or provision of that specific kind of support. This research should specifically investigate and assess whether the financial supports offered by Income Support Services are perceived to be sufficient for the person and his/her family to acquire the essentials they need.

The benefits that the cushioning effects of social support bring, in particular from family and close friends, obviously cannot be taken advantage of by those

who do not have a family (e.g., divorced or separated people without contact with their children or other relatives). Those who, on the other hand, for some reason feel they cannot count on (not necessarily do not have) people to offer support to them in times of stress are consequently psychologically worse off. It would be desirable that alternative sources of support are provided for those individuals so that they perceive that support is available if needed.

It should also be noted that although married individuals report lower levels of emotional loneliness and higher levels of both perceived and received support than the other two groups, they did not have the lowest levels of psychological distress and related symptoms. It was consistently found that the never-married individuals who, although more emotionally lonely than the married participants and lower on social support, were the ones who obtained the lowest scores on the psychological distress measures. This set of results seems to indicate that perceived social support alone may not counteract the stresses married people feel when unemployed.

Moreover, both married and divorced/separated groups reported experiencing higher levels of both overall and social loneliness than the never-married participants, suggesting that these two types of loneliness are perhaps more important factors than being emotionally lonely to the psychological well-being of the unemployed. The stronger association found between social loneliness and psychological distress than between emotional loneliness and psychological distress partially explains this thought. This means that there is a greater chance of being psychologically distressed if the unemployed person is socially lonely than if he/she is emotionally lonely.

Because these results indicate socially loneliness seems to be an important factor contributing to the impoverished psychological well-being of the unemployed, it becomes important to consider avenues for ensuring unemployed people have access to situations where they will interact with others in such a manner so as to feel they belong to a network of people with common interests, activities, and supports.

Situations in which the unemployed person feels there are other people experiencing the same sort of events and where they can make effective contact with others outside of the family and the household would be particularly helpful. A setting where the unemployed are welcome to discuss their experiences and interchange information or advice with others would assist problem-solution. In fact, an environment where groups of unemployed people get together and have common interests (such as the unemployed workers' union) would be likely to find its members psychologically better than other unemployed people simply because together they experience a sense of power and control over things.

It could be also argued that because the never married participants were on average 14 years younger than the married subjects, and 12 years younger than the divorced and separated, they were not as socially isolated and lonely as the other two groups. Roberts et al. (1982, cited in Ullah, Banks & Warr, 1985) found that unemployment is rarely socially isolating or experienced as stigma among young people. Moreover, Warr (1984, cited in Ullah, Banks & Warr, 1985) found that contact with friends was actually significantly increased among young unemployed adults, especially those under 25. These findings

further suggest that social loneliness is less frequent among young unemployed individuals and may serve as a factor that mitigates against the stress of unemployment.

A clearer example of the necessity for social support seems to emerge in divorced/separated participants' results. Divorced/separated participants in this study consistently had higher levels of distress and loneliness and lower levels of perceived social support. These results are not altogether surprising as studies have consistently reported that divorced and separated people have poorer mental and physical health than comparable married, widowed, or never-married adults (Bloom et al., 1978; Briscoe et al., 1973, cited in Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 1987). Similarly, Wallerstein and Kelly, (1980), found that loneliness was a problem for many separated men and women, particularly for those who were not engaged in regular social and dating activities.

One of the most important findings of this study was that the overall supports received from family and close friends were the only ones significantly associated with the participants' levels of psychological distress. This result provides confirmation of results reported by Gore (1978), Pearlin et al. (1981), Caplan, (1982) and Cobb, (1976). Social supports received from family and friends also were significantly correlated with the participants' overall, social, and emotional loneliness levels. Supports from either other unemployed people or the NZES did not seem to prove effective in buffering the levels of psychological distress among the unemployed. It can be assumed that these received types of supports simply did not match the needs of the unemployed and that their family and friends were better able to deliver the appropriate

supports. It should be considered that both other unemployed people and NZES staff are not supposed to be provide financial assistance and that the most likely type of support received from them would be of the informational type.

In addition, Jackson (1988) reported findings that show the long-term unemployed increase their reliance on family social support. Taken together with the findings of this study, it may be concluded that the people with low levels of social support, such as the divorced/separated, may be increasingly vulnerable to adverse effects of unemployment as time progresses. This would suggest that it is vital to find a means to offer "at-risk" unemployed the means to find a social support network to provide them with the social support necessary to combat the stresses of unemployment. Again NZES staff deal with providing the unemployed with opportunities for training and finding employment, especially for those who have access to no other type of employment agency support and have had problems finding employment for a relatively long time.

Assistance that is available to those with high levels of social support has been found to take on many forms. For example, family members and close friends will initially offer emotional encouragement and assurance that help is available if needed, but as the length unemployment extends they offer more instrumental sorts of support as well, such as monetary help, etc., (Jackson, 1988). Moreover, Caplan, (1982) showed that family members are likely to continue to treat the individual with love and respect and even provide the person with alternative roles in the family until he or she can rework his or her

life. Similarly, Amundson and Borgen, (1987) found that the family and friends most often offered developmental supports to the unemployed. That is, they gave comfort and guidance that caused shifts to positive emotions, constructive career planning, and job search activity. This is undoubtedly important as the family-supported individual would be more likely to feel motivated to search for work than those who lack family support.

Family members were not only found to be the main providers of support in this study, but those who counted on supportive families under the stressful circumstances of unemployment were psychologically advantaged from those who did not. These findings suggest more efforts should be placed on ascertaining how families should or could deliver better and more appropriate supports to the unemployed. However, it should also be considered that the family of the unemployed themselves may also be suffering financial difficulties. In that case, they may only be able to provide the unemployed with emotional, informational or affectionate supports, but may not be able to financially assist him or her.

On the other hand, peer support (support from other unemployed people), only significantly correlated with the sleep disturbances experienced by all the participants, while the New Zealand Employment Service staff supports were not significantly correlated with any of the psychological distress variables. All this can be taken to indicate that the supports received from other unemployed people or from the New Zealand Employment Service staff do not have a particularly strong bearing to the unemployed's levels of mental health. It could also be argued that the supports these two groups had recently provided the

unemployed with were not specifically matched to their needs and therefore, failed to exert a positive, significant influence on the psychological well-being of the recipients. It would be reasonable to assume that other unemployed people would have probably themselves to look after foremost and because of their financial restriction they would not be able to financially support their peers. Having said that, received support from peers was significantly negatively correlated with psychological distress measures for people with low levels of perceived support. This implies that for those people in particular, support from other unemployed may be important for their psychological well-being.

A somewhat surprising finding was the result that tangible support was not correlated with the individuals' sense of psychological distress. This result is inconsistent with the belief that this type of support is of most importance to the psychological well-being of the unemployed as it supposedly helps the individual cope better with the daily hassles of life (Cutrona & Russell, 1990). However, it should be remembered that the measure of tangible support used in this study assessed primarily the provision of needed services (e.g., someone to prepare meals if needed) rather than the provision of financial or monetary assistance. Further research into the availability of specific financial aid to the unemployed is warranted in order to evaluate the influence that specific type of support has on their psychological health.

To sum up, perceived social supports seem to mitigate, or buffer, the impact of the negative psychological stresses, financial stress, or loneliness unemployed people experience. Thus, the results obtained in this study support the buffering hypothesis of social support and are consistent with the evidence that

the perception of social support is closely related to health outcomes (Wethington & Kessler, 1986).

The most important sources of support for the unemployed seem to be family members and close friends. Similarly, the most important kind of support for the unemployed seems to be positive interaction, which might help the unemployed by providing him or her with ways of coping by relaxing and doing enjoyable things. This result is not surprising because it is thought that this type of support may be particularly beneficial to the unemployed for several reasons. It may reduce the unemployed person's stress by fulfilling a need for affiliation and contact with others as well as by helping to distract them from worrying about problems, or by facilitating positive affective moods (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

Emotional, affectionate and informational support are also all important in alleviating the stresses unemployed people face. These supports enhance the unemployed's self-esteem, by reassuring them that they are appreciated for their own value, and that their experiences are accepted, together with helping them to understand and to cope better with their problems.

A special concern should be addressed to the divorced and separated people who, sadly and unsurprisingly, fared poorly on all psychological distress measures. This group of people appears to be particularly vulnerable to the negative effects unemployment may bring upon the individual. Family support (or the lack of it) seems to be of particular relevance in the case of this subgroup of unemployed people.

Psychological and economic distress variables, along with social support and loneliness measures are all interrelated. Supports perceived to be available by the unemployed are important in that they help to reduce feelings of loneliness, and also buffer the negative effects of unemployment. However, they do not totally alleviate the financial pressures they encounter, with consequent detriments to their mental health and a very high level of worrying. Further research is warranted in the areas of how the poverty and financial deprivations the unemployed face can be overcome and better mental health levels achieved.

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6. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

GENERAL BACKGROUND

Please answer these questions about yourself.

How old are you?.....

Sex: (please tick) Male ( ) Female ( )

Marital Status Never Married ( )

Married ( )

De Facto ( )

Divorced/Separated ( )

Widowed ( )

How many dependent children do you have?

A) None ( ) Go to next question.

Or enter number ( )

B) How old are they? Please tick one or more if appropriate

Under 5 years ( )

Between 5 & 10 years ( )

Between 10 & 15 years ( )

Between 15 & 21 years ( )

Over 21 ( )

Within which ethnic (racial) group do you identify yourself?

European (Pakeha) New Zealander ( )

New Zealand Maori ( )

Pacific Islander ( )

Other ( ) Please state which.....

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Primary ( )

Secondary ( )

School Cert. ( )

Sixth Form Cert. ( )

Degree/Diploma(Univ./Polytechnic) ( )

Post-Grade Degree/Diploma ( )

What position did you hold in your last job?.....

What kind of job are you looking for now?.....

How long have you been unemployed (actively looking for work)? Please state N° of months..... if unemployed for less than a month, please state N° of weeks.....

The following questions present a statement which you have to rate on a 1 to 5 scale according to your situation. Please circle the number that best represents your opinion.

Do you consider yourself to be lonely?

NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 ALWAYS=5

Do you consider yourself to be isolated?

NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 ALWAYS=5

Do you think you receive enough social support (information, encouragement, assistance) from **friends**?

NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 ALWAYS=5

Do you think you receive enough social support (information, encouragement, assistance) from **relatives/family**?

NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 ALWAYS=5

Do you think you receive enough social support (information, encouragement, assistance) from **agencies** such as the New Zealand Employment Service?

NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 ALWAYS=5

Do you think you receive enough social support (information, encouragement, assistance) from the **community**?

NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 ALWAYS=5

Are you satisfied with the **number** of social relationships you have?

VERY DISSATISFIED	MODERATELY	NOT SURE	MODERATELY SATISFIED	VERY
1	2	3	4	5

Are you satisfied with the **quality** of the social relationships you have?

VERY DISSATISFIED	MODERATELY	NOT SURE	MODERATELY SATISFIED	VERY
1	2	3	4	5

How important is it for you to find employment in the near future?

VERY DISSATISFIED	MODERATELY	NOT SURE	MODERATELY	VERY SATISFIED
1	2	3	4	5

How important is it for your family that you find employment in the near future?

VERY DISSATISFIED	MODERATELY	NOT SURE	MODERATELY	VERY SATISFIED
1	2	3	4	5

How important is work for you?

VERY UNIMPORTANT	MODERATELY	NOT SURE	MODERATELY	VERY IMPORTANT
1	2	3	4	5

How hard do you find it to make ends meet?

VERY EASY	MODERATELY	NOT SURE	MODERATELY	VERY HARD
1	2	3	4	5

Thinking back over the last month, have you had serious financial worries?

NEVER=1	HARDLY EVER=2	SOMETIMES=3	NEARLY ALL THE TIME=4	ALL THE TIME=5

APPENDIX 2

GENERAL HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE-30

(GOLDBERG, 1972)

We should like to know about your general well-being and how your health has been, overall, *over the past few weeks*. Please answer ALL the questions on the following pages simply by **UNDERLINING** the answer which you think most nearly applies to you. Remember that we want to know about present and recent complaints, **not** those that you had in the past.

HAVE YOU RECENTLY:

been able to concentrate on whatever you are doing?
Better than usual Same as usual Less than usual Much less than usual

lost much sleep over worry?
Not at all No more than usual Rather more than usual Much more than usual

felt that you are playing a useful part in things?
More so than usual Same as usual Less useful than usual Much less useful

felt capable of making decisions about things?
More so than usual Same as usual Less so than usual Much less capable

felt constantly under strain?
Not at all No more than usual Rather more than usual Much more than usual

felt that you couldn't overcome your difficulties?
Not at all No more than usual Rather more than usual Much more than usual

been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?
More so than usual Same as usual Less so than usual Much less than usual

been able to face up to your problems?
More so than usual Same as usual Less able than usual Much less able

been feeling unhappy and depressed?
Not at all No more than usual Rather more than usual Much more than usual

been losing confidence in yourself?
Not at all No more than usual Rather more than usual Much more than usual

HAVE YOU RECENTLY:

been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?
Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual

been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered?
More so than usual | Same as usual | Less so than usual | Much less than usual

been managing to keep yourself busy and occupied?
More so than usual | Same as usual | Rather less than usual | Much less than usual

been getting out of the house as much as usual?
More than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual

been feeling on the whole you were doing things well?
Better than usual | About the same | Less well than usual | Much less well

been satisfied with the way you've carried out your task?
More satisfied | About same as usual | Less satisfied than usual | Much less satisfied

been taking things hard?
Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual

found everything getting on top of (too much) for you?
Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual

been feeling nervous and strung up (hung up) all the time?
Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual

found at times you couldn't do anything because your nerves were too bad?
Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual

been having restless, disturbed nights?
Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual

been managing as well as most people would in your shoes (place)?
Better than most | About the same | Rather less well | Much less well

been able to feel warmth and affection for those near to you?
Better than usual | About same as usual | Less well than usual | Much less well

been finding it easy to get on with other people?
Better than usual | About same as usual | Less well than usual | Much less well

spent much time chatting with people?
More time than usual About same as usual Less than usual Much less than usual

been finding life a struggle all the time?
Not at all No more than usual Rather more than usual Much more than usual

been getting scared or panicky for no good reason?
Not at all No more than usual Rather more than usual Much more than usual

felt that life is entirely hopeless?
Not at all No more than usual Rather more than usual Much more than usual

been feeling hopeful about your own future?
More so than usual About same as usual Less so than usual Much less hopeful

felt that life isn't worth living?
Not at all No more than usual Rather more than usual Much more than usual

APPENDIX 3

FINANCIAL STRESS

(FEATHER, 1989)

This questionnaire will reflect the level of financial stress you are currently experiencing.

At the present time:

Are you able to afford a home suitable for (yourself/your family)?

DEFINITELY NOT 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 YES, DEFINITELY

Are you able to afford furniture or household equipment that needs to be replaced?

DEFINITELY NOT 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 YES, DEFINITELY

Are you able to afford the kind of car you need?

Do you have enough money for the kind of food (you/your family) should have?

DEFINITELY NOT 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 YES, DEFINITELY

Do you have enough money for the kind of medical care (you/your family) should have?

DEFINITELY NOT 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 YES, DEFINITELY

Do you have enough money for the kind of clothing (you/your family) should have?

DEFINITELY NOT 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 YES, DEFINITELY

Do you have enough money for the leisure activities (you/your family) want(s)?

DEFINITELY NOT 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 YES, DEFINITELY

Note. Scores were reversed and added up together so that the higher the number, the higher the level of financial stress experienced.

APPENDIX 4

MEDICAL OUTCOMES SOCIAL SUPPORT SURVEY

(SHERBOURNE & STEWART, 1991)

Next are some questions about the support that is available to you. About how many close friends and close relatives do you have (people you feel at ease with and can talk to about what is on your mind)?.....

People sometimes look to others for companionship, assistance, or other types of support. How often is each of the following kinds of support available to you if you need it?

(Circle One Number on Each Line)

Someone to help you if you were confined to bed.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone you can count on to listen to you when you need to talk.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	•	3	4	5

Someone to give you good advice about a crisis.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone to take you to the doctor if you needed it.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone who shows you love and affection.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone to have a good time with.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone to give you information to help you understand a situation.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone to confide in or talk about yourself and your problems.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone who hugs you.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone to get together with for relaxation.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone to prepare your meals if you were unable to do it yourself.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone whose advice you really want.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone to do things with to help you get your mind off things.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone to help with daily chores if you were sick.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone to share your most private worries and fears with.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone to turn to for suggestions about how to deal with a personal problem.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone to do something enjoyable with.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone who understands your problems.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

Someone to love and make you feel wanted.

None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX 5

MULTIDIMENSIONAL SOCIAL SUPPORT SURVEY

(WINEFIELD, WINEFIELD & TIGGERMANN, 1992)

Below are some questions about the kind of help and support you have available to you in coping with your life at present. The questions refer to three different groups of people who might have been providing support to you IN THE LAST MONTH. For each item, please circle the alternative which shows your answer.

A. FIRSTLY, THINK OF YOUR FAMILY AND CLOSE FRIENDS, ESPECIALLY THE 2-3 WHO ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU.

- How often did they really listen to you when you talked about your concerns and problems?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY /ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

- How often did you feel that they were really trying to understand your problems?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY /ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

- How often did they really make you feel loved?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY /ALWAYS
1	2		4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

- How often did they help you in practical ways, like doing things for you or lending you money?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY /ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

- How often did they answer your questions or give you advice about how to solve your problems?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY /ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

- How often could you use them as examples of how to deal with your problems?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY /ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

B. NOW, THINK OF OTHER PEOPLE ABOUT YOUR AGE THAT YOU KNOW WHO ARE LIKE YOU IN BEING <u>UNEMPLOYED</u>.

- How often did they really listen to you when you talked about your concerns and problems?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY /ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

- How often did you feel that they were really trying to understand your problems?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY /ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

- How often did they help you in practical ways, like doing things for you or lending you money?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY /ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

- How often did they answer your questions or give you advice about how to solve your problems?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY /ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

- How often could you use them as examples of how to deal with your problems?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY /ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

C. LASTLY, THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE IN SOME SORT OF AUTHORITY OVER YOU. FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU ARE A STUDENT, IT MEANS YOUR LECTURERS AND TUTORS, IF YOU ARE UNEMPLOYED, IT MEANS THE NEW ZEALAND EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF. ANSWER FOR THE 2-3 YOU SEE THE MOST.

- How often did they really listen to you when you talked about your concerns and problems?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY /ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

- How often did you feel that they were really trying to understand your problems?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY /ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

- How often did they fulfil their responsibilities towards you in helpful practical ways?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

- How often did they answer your questions or give you advice about how to solve your problems?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY /ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

- How often could you use them as examples of how to deal with your problems?

NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	USUALLY /ALWAYS
1	2	3	4

and would you have liked them to do this

MORE OFTEN	LESS OFTEN	IT WAS JUST RIGHT
1	2	3

APPENDIX 6

UCLA REVISED LONELINESS SCALE

(RUSSELL, PEPLAU, & CUTRONA, 1980)

This questionnaire gives a general measure of loneliness. Please indicate how often you feel the way described in each of the following statements. *Circle* **one** number for each.

---

1. I feel in tune with the people around me.*

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

2. I lack companionship.

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

3. There is no one I can turn to.

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

4. I do not feel alone.*

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

5. I feel part of a group of friends.*

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

6. I have a lot in common with the people around me.*

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

7. I am no longer close to anyone

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

8. My interests and ideas are not shared by those around me.

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

9. I am an outgoing person.*

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

10. There are people I feel close to.*

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

11. I feel left out.

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

12. My social relationships are superficial.

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

13. No one really knows me well.

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

14. I feel isolated from others.

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

15. I can find companionship when I want it.*

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

16. There are people who really understand me.*

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

17. I am unhappy being so withdrawn.

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

18. People are around me but not with me.

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

19. There are people I can talk to.*

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

20. There are people I can turn to.*

Never=1 Rarely=2 Sometimes=3 Often=4 Very Often=5

Note. Items marked with an asterisk (*) were reversed scored. Option N° 5 was added to the original questionnaire in order to get a wider spread of results.

APPENDIX 7

EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL LONELINESS SCALES

(WITTENBERG, 1986)

These questions refer to the feelings about the quality of your social relationships. Indicate how often you have felt the way described in each of the following statements during the last few weeks.

1. Most everyone around me seems like a stranger.
   NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 VERY OFTEN=5
2. I don't get much satisfaction from the groups I participate in.
   NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 VERY OFTEN=5
3. There are good people around me who understand my views and beliefs.*
   NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 VERY OFTEN=5
4. There is no one I have felt close to for a long time.
   NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 VERY OFTEN=5
5. I have a romantic partner who gives me support and encouragement.*
   NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 VERY OFTEN=5
6. I belong to a network of friends.*
   NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 VERY OFTEN=5
7. There are people I can count on for companionship.*
   NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 VERY OFTEN=5
8. I don't have one specific relationship in which I feel understood.
   NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 VERY OFTEN=5
9. I am an important part of the emotional well-being of another person.*
   NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 VERY OFTEN=5
10. I don't have a special love relationship.
    NEVER=1 RARELY=2 SOMETIMES=3 OFTEN=4 VERY OFTEN=5

Note. Items 1, 2, 3, 6, & 7 refer to social loneliness. Items 4, 5, 8, 9, & 10 refer to emotional loneliness. Items marked with an asterisk (*) were reversed scored.